

READ AND CONSIDERED
DATE 1/20/26 BY Ch

Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: Animal Services in Sonoma County: Separate and Not Equal
Report Date: June 13, 2025
Response by: Patricia Farrar-Rivas Title: Mayor
Agency/Department Name: Sonoma City Council

FINDINGS:

[List numbers: F1, F3- F10]

I (we) agree with the findings numbered: F1, F3-F10

I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: _____

(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed with an explanation of the reasons.)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

[List numbers: R1-R2, R4-R5]

- Recommendations numbered: _____ have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered: R1-R2, R4 have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered: _____ require(s) further analysis.
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. ***This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report.***)
- Recommendations numbered: R-5 (not applicable) will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: 9-17-2025 Signed: Patricia Farrar-Rivas

Number of pages attached: 3

(See attached PC Civil Grand Jury Response Requirements)

PROPOSED RESPONSES

City of Sonoma — Responses to Grand Jury Recommendations (F1, F3-F10) - Animal Services in Sonoma County: Separate and Not Equal

Responses to Findings - Animal Services in Sonoma County: Separate and Not Equal

F1. County/cities never fully adopted the 2012 DHS animal-services recommendations, leaving agencies without shared standards, communication, data-sharing, or oversight.

City Response: Agree. We support re-establishing a countywide framework for standards, data sharing, and oversight, and will participate in any county-convened task force and related initiatives.

F3. Lack of coordination between SCAS and NBAS impedes a fully coordinated countywide disaster animal-evacuation plan.

City Response: Agree. Although Sonoma does not contract with NBAS, fragmented coordination affects countywide readiness. We will engage through the County to ensure roles/communications are clear across all providers.

F4. Insufficient funding/staffing makes it hard for some agencies to provide effective training for staff/volunteers.

City Response: Agree. For City-managed animal control (Sonoma Police Department), we will formalize annual training (e.g., PC 832 compliance, disaster animal care/evacuation refreshers) and coordinate volunteer training expectations with SCAS and Pets Lifeline.

F5. Insufficient funding/staffing makes it hard to maintain websites and social media needed for effective public outreach.

City Response: Agree. We will improve City web content on licensing/rabies/spay-neuter and cross-link to SCAS and Pets Lifeline resources; we'll also coordinate with the County's campaign once launched.

F6. Multiple, different fee structures for licenses/services confuse the public and complicate billing/collections.

City Response: Agree. We support exploring a standardized countywide fee framework and shared online licensing administration to reduce confusion and improve compliance.

F7. Low licensing rates undermine rabies control, make returns-to-owner harder, and reduce revenue.

City Response: Agree. We will expand outreach, enhance renewal reminders, and support low-cost rabies vaccination access to raise compliance.

F8. Uniform adoption of an online licensing vendor (e.g., DocuPet or comparable) would increase licensing rates and compliance.

City Response: Agree. We will evaluate adopting a common online licensing platform in coordination with the County and other cities.

F9. Failure to promote licensing benefits/requirements and to send renewals consistently contributes to low compliance and revenue loss.

City Response: Agree. We will implement a communications plan (web, social, utility bill inserts, vet partners) and consistent renewal notices aligned with any countywide system.

F10. Centralized training resources could enhance performance of animal-services employees and volunteers.

City Response: Agree. We will coordinate with DHS/SCAS to access shared training resources and integrate them into annual training for Sonoma Police Department Animal Control and local shelter partners.

City of Sonoma — Responses to Grand Jury Recommendations (R1, R2, R4, R5) - Animal Services in Sonoma County: Separate and Not Equal

Context: Per the report, the City of Sonoma provides animal control through the Sonoma Police Department (including licensing). Shelter care is provided as needed by SCAS and Pets Lifeline; the City does not contract with NBAS.

R1. Establish a countywide Animal Services Task Force (action directed to BOS/DHS; due Nov 1, 2025).

Report text (summary): BOS to direct DHS to convene a task force of county, city, and shelter representatives to revisit the 2012 DHS report and recommend a governance structure; standardize fees and adopt a common licensing vendor; seek efficiencies via shared resources. (Addresses F1, F3–F6, F9–F10.)

City of Sonoma response: Agree (supports implementation by BOS/DHS). While the City cannot implement R1 directly, we support the formation of the Task Force and will participate fully once convened.

R2. Each city to delegate representatives to the Task Force (due Jan 1, 2026).

Report text (summary): Each of Sonoma County's nine cities will assign one or more representatives to the Task Force. (Addresses F1.)

City of Sonoma response: Will be implemented. The City Manager will designate a representative to the Task Force. **Timeline:** Delegation completed by **January 1, 2026.**